

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

Fourth Edition, 2020-2030



South Carolina
Forestry Commission



This drone photo captures the intersection of three progeny tests of one-, two- and three-year-old loblolly pines in front of a mature commercial stand at Manchester State Forest in July. Nursery & Tree Improvement staff will select the best trees from these tests at age four to be grafted into clone banks. Data from these progeny tests will help determine selections to be included in future coastal orchards at Niederhof Forestry Center.

GOAL 1

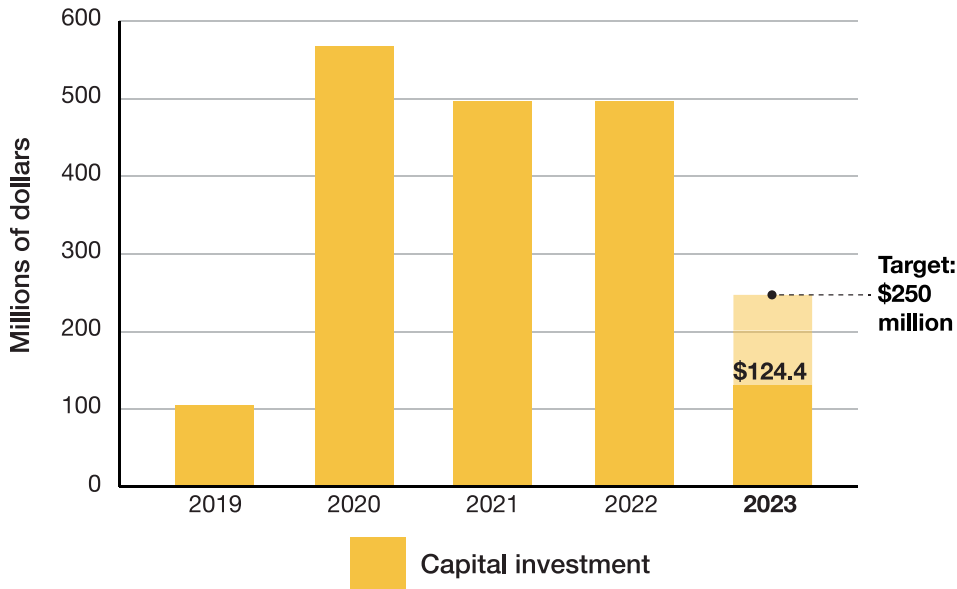
ENHANCE PUBLIC BENEFITS FROM TREES & FORESTS

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Announced capital investment in forestry

FY2022-23
\$124.4
MILLION

FY2021-22
497.5
MILLION



Meaningful use of measure:

Announced capital investment is a metric typically reported by the economic development community. It allows us to track the growth of forestry investment over time. This is a longstanding performance measure that allows the agency to compare current and future efforts against historical perspectives.

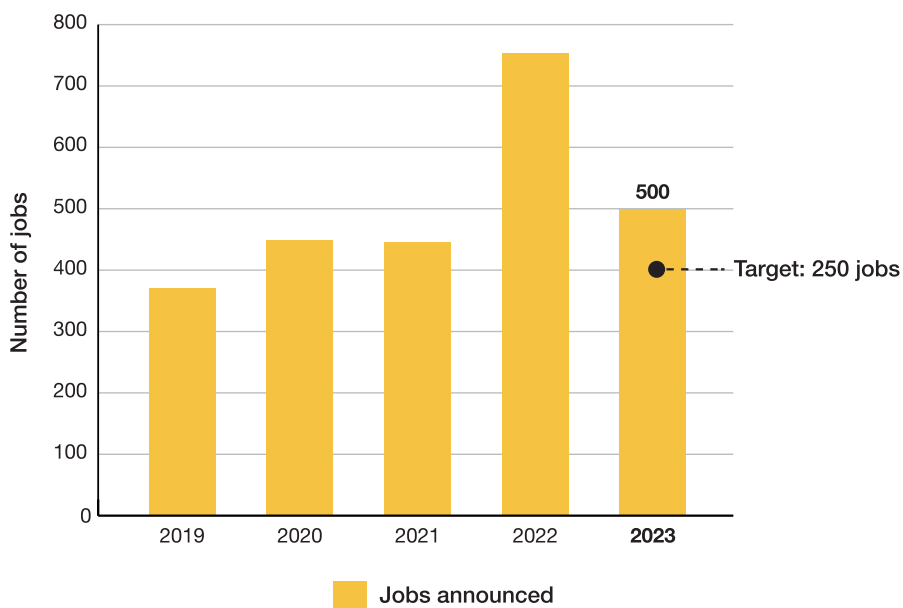
Two forestry projects were expected to be announced in the 2nd quarter of 2023, but they likely will not be unveiled until FY2024.



Announced new job creation in forestry

FY2022-23
500
JOBS

FY2021-22
767
JOBS



Meaningful use of measure:

Announced new jobs is a metric typically reported by the economic development community. It allows us to track the growth of forestry employment over time. This is a longstanding performance measure that allows the agency to compare current and future efforts against historical perspectives.

Five of the 11 forestry-based announcements this fiscal year will create over 100 new jobs each.



GOAL 1

ENHANCE PUBLIC BENEFITS FROM TREES & FORESTS

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Timber products output (TPO)

FY2022-23

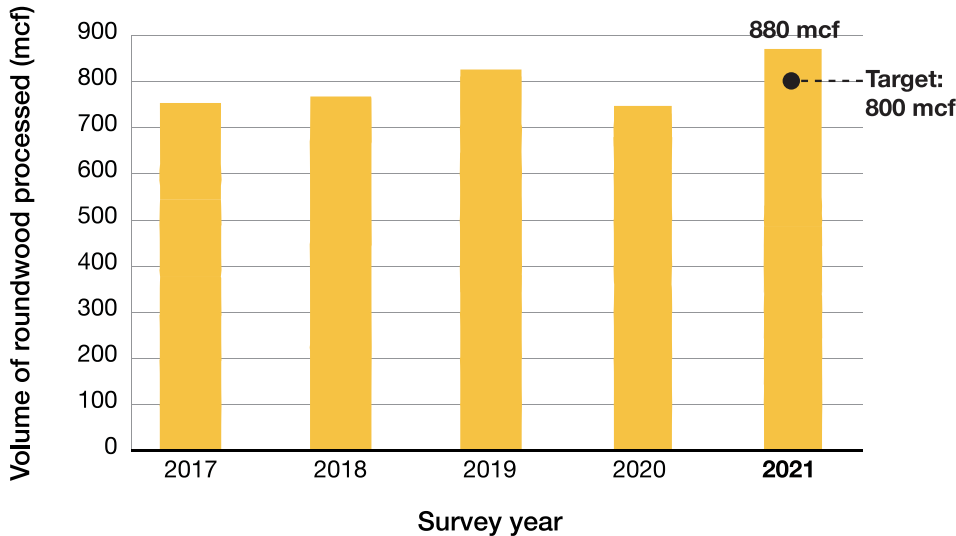
880

MILLION CU. FT.

FY2021-22

762

MILLION CU. FT.



Meaningful use of measure:

Industrial timber production as measured by the Timber Products Output (TPO) mill survey is the best measure of the health and growth of our forest industry by major product category. This is a longstanding performance measure that allows the agency to compare current and future efforts against historical perspectives.

South Carolina continues to produce more forest products than ever recorded. 2022 TPO data collection was completed in a timely manner, and it will be reported in October 2023.



PERFORMANCE INDICES

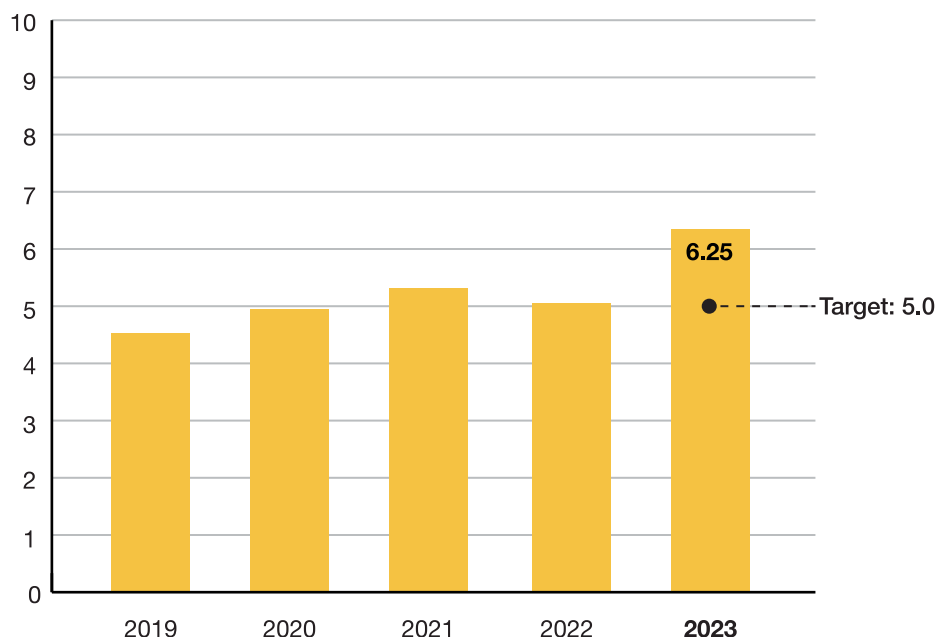
Forest markets development index

FY2022-23

6.25

FY2021-22

5.04



Meaningful use of measure:

Composite measure that quantifies key agency efforts to retain and grow markets for forest products.

SCFC's marketing position was filled October 2022 and staff operated at full speed for last 2 quarters of the fiscal year. Individual metrics in index were all met or exceeded. 100% of TPO surveys were completed and the number of business assists was 150% of target.



GOAL 1

ENHANCE PUBLIC BENEFITS FROM TREES & FORESTS

PERFORMANCE INDICES

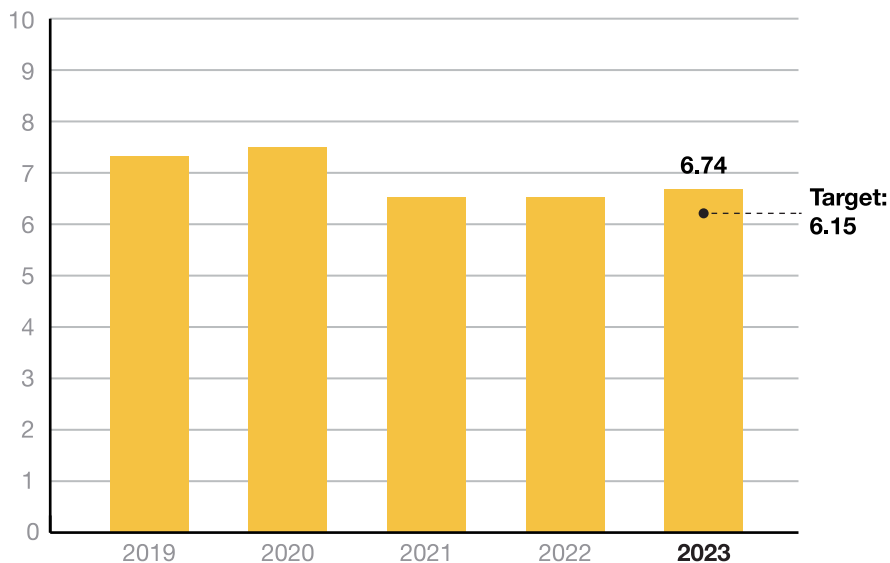
Forest ecosystem benefits index

FY2022-23

6.74

FY2021-22

6.53



Meaningful use of measure:

Composite measure that quantifies efforts to maintain or increase ecosystem services provided by forests.

BMP compliance rates remain high as Environmental Program staff continues to develop and maintain relationships across the industry, deliver educational programs to promote BMP compliance, and engage in partnerships focused on ecosystem services.



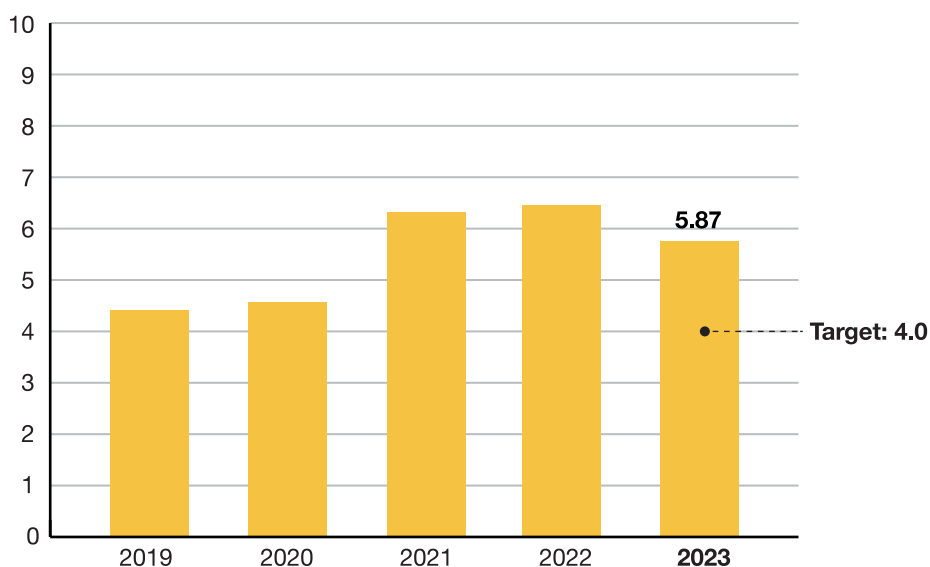
Nursery & tree improvement index

FY2022-23

5.87

FY2021-22

6.42



Meaningful use of measure:

Composite measure that quantifies agency efforts to improve the health and productive capacity of planted timberlands.

A larger-than-normal cone harvest resulted in revenue exceeding our target, and our progeny test activity is meeting NC State Tree Improvement expectations. The sole disappointing measure is the number of seedlings sold this past planting season.



GOAL 2

PROTECT FORESTS FROM HARM

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

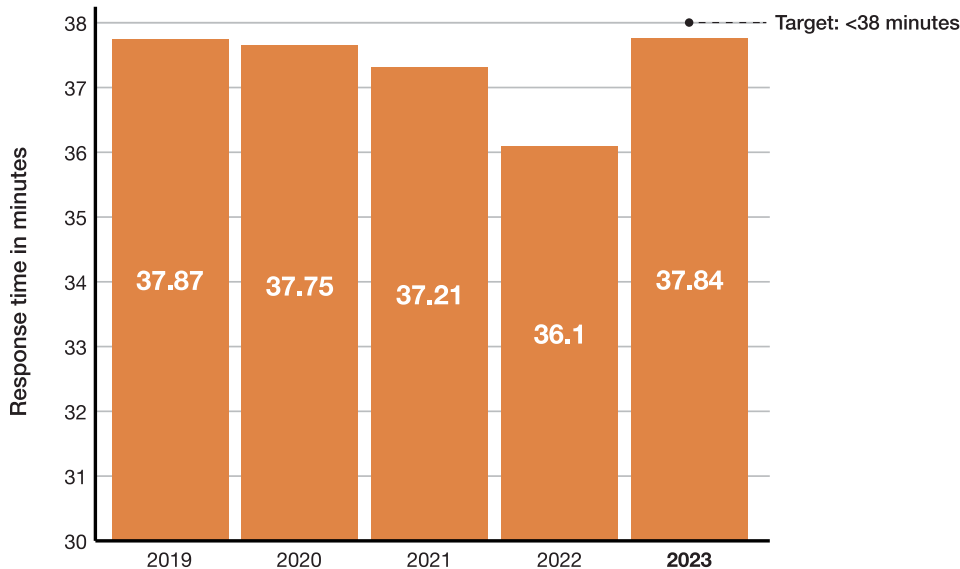
Average wildfire response time

FY2022-23

37.84
MINUTES

FY2021-22

36.1
MINUTES



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies the total time needed for agency firefighters to arrive at scene of wildfire. This is a longstanding performance measure that allows the agency to compare current and future efforts against historical perspectives.

Response time returned to a more historical average in FY2022-23, but is still within the agency's stated goal of <38 minutes.



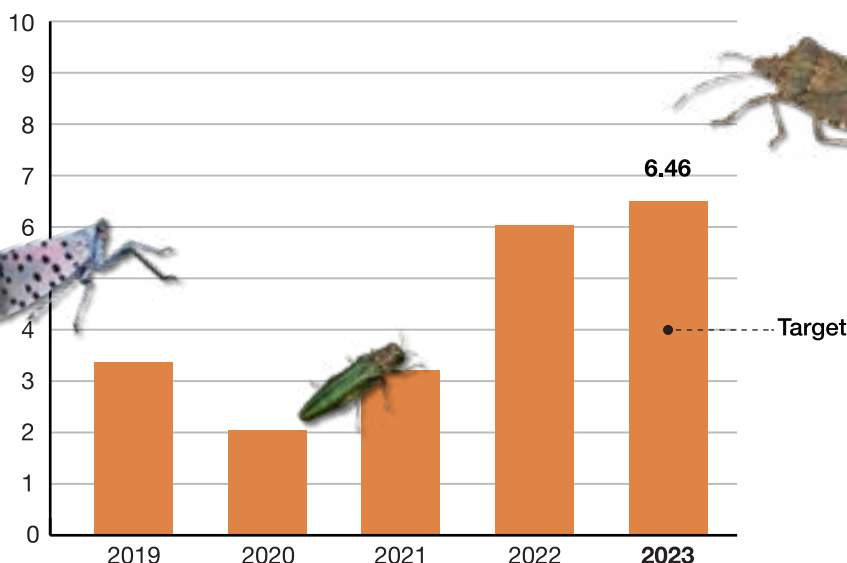
Forest health index

FY2022-23

6.46

FY2021-22

6.02



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies agency efforts to prevent and reduce damage from insects, diseases, invasive species and other threats to forest health.

The hours of trainings conducted by Forest Health staff in FY2022-23 was more than quadruple the previous year's total, and the number of people reached by in-person contacts more than doubled.



GOAL 2

PROTECT FORESTS FROM HARM

PERFORMANCE INDICES

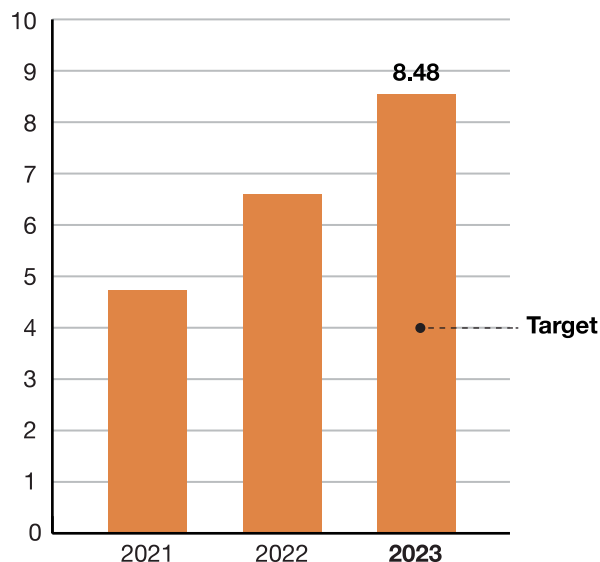
Wildfire prevention index

FY2022-23

8.48

FY2021-22

6.69



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies agency efforts to reduce wildfire risks for forests and communities.

The strength of this index in FY2022-23 was driven in large part by the WUI accomplishments resulting from our very successful CancelWildfiresSC campaign and by the number of acres newly covered by CWPPs.



GOAL 3

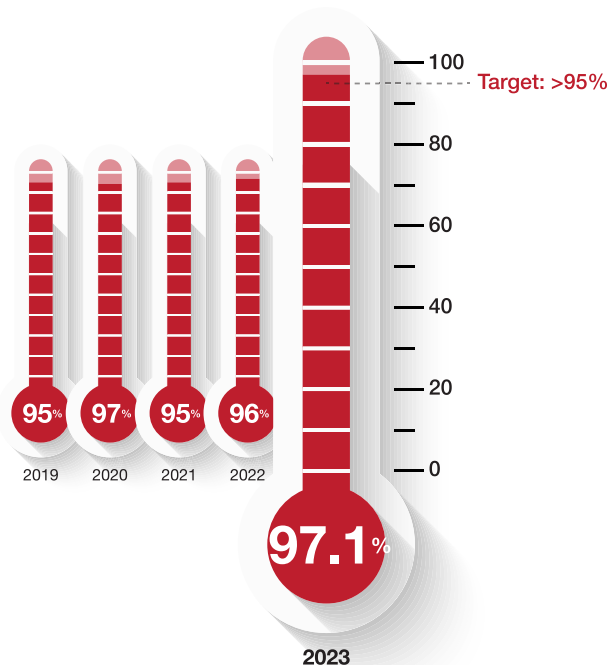
CONSERVE WORKING FORESTS

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Landowner satisfaction

FY2022-23
97.1
PERCENT

FY2021-22
96.1
PERCENT



Meaningful use of measure:

Measuring customer satisfaction provides an indication of how well the agency is meeting its customers' expectations and allows SCFC to improve its quality of service.

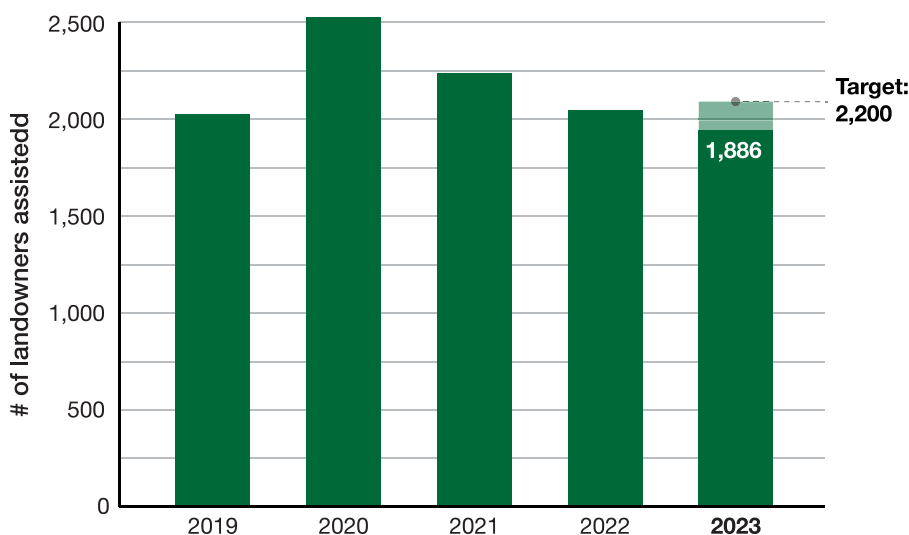
Despite decreases in other forest management-related metrics this fiscal year, our landowner satisfaction remains very high.



Number of landowners assisted

FY2022-23
1,886
LANDOWNERS

FY2021-22
2,093
LANDOWNERS



Meaningful use of measure:

The number of landowners assisted is directly correlated to the economic impact of private land management in SC. This is a longstanding performance measure that allows the agency to compare current and future efforts against historical perspectives.

The large number of vacancies in the Forest Management section contributed to the decrease in this index's value from FY2021-22.



GOAL 3

CONSERVE WORKING FORESTS

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

% of stewardship plan acres implemented in priority areas

FY2022-23
35.2
PERCENT

FY2021-22
46
PERCENT



- Non stewardship potential (9,724,514 ac)
- Stewardship potential (4,611,856 ac)
- High stewardship potential (5,466,991 ac)

Meaningful use of measure:

This measure gauges the agency's effectiveness in delivering Stewardship-level forest management assistance.

Overall implementation of Forest Stewardship plans was 88%, but only 40% of plan acres were in federal priority areas.



Number of land acquisition projects evaluated

FY2022-23
11
PROJECTS

FY2021-22
3
PROJECTS



Meaningful use of measure:

Stand-alone measure that quantifies the agency's efforts to seek opportunities to acquire land to grow the State Forest system.

GOAL 3

CONSERVE WORKING FORESTS

PERFORMANCE INDICES

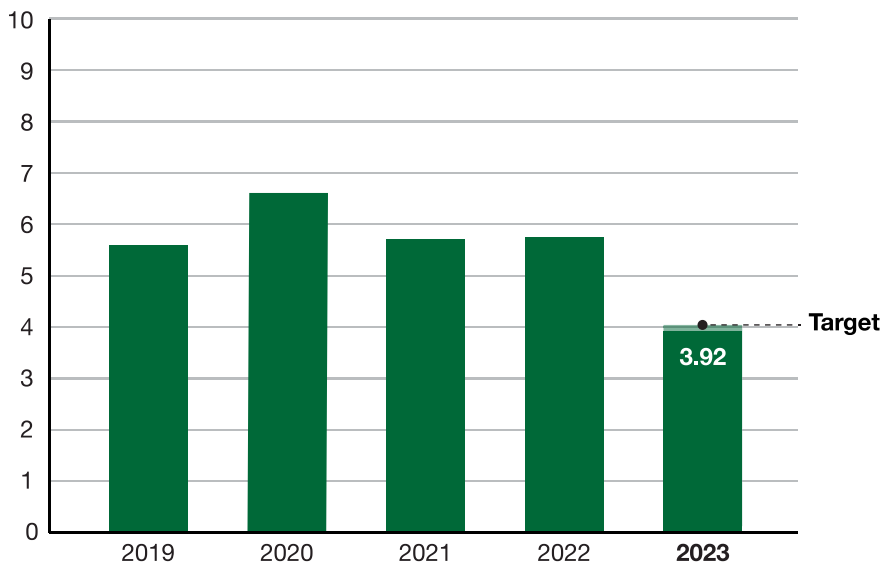
Landowner assistance index

FY2022-23

3.92

FY2021-22

5.83



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies agency technical assistance efforts, which promote the sustainable and active management of family owned forestlands.

A decrease in the number of management plans, primarily due to forester vacancies, contributed significantly to the reduction of this index's value from FY2021-22.



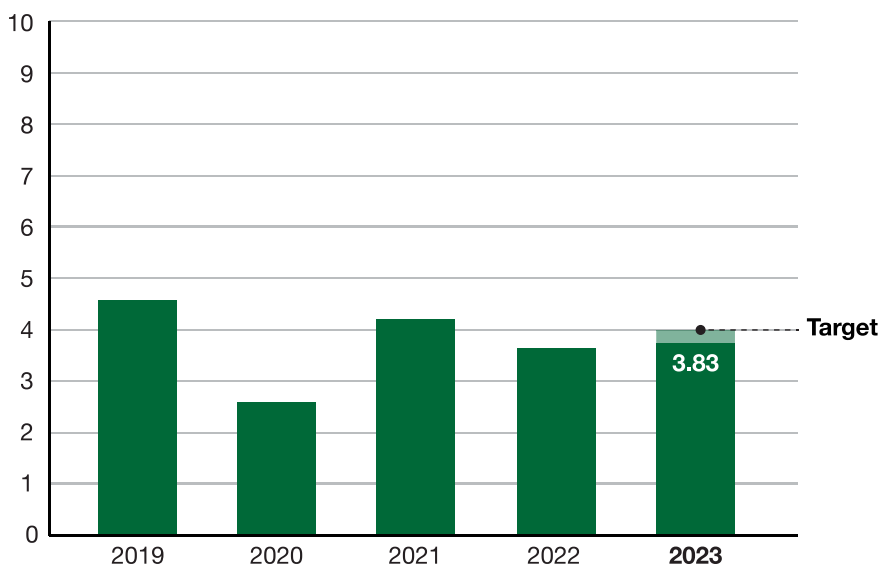
Prescribed fire effort index

FY2022-23

3.83

FY2021-22

3.66



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies agency efforts to increase the responsible use of prescribed fire.

Numerous vacancies this fiscal year are responsible for accomplishments falling short of the target.



GOAL 3

CONSERVE WORKING FORESTS

PERFORMANCE INDICES

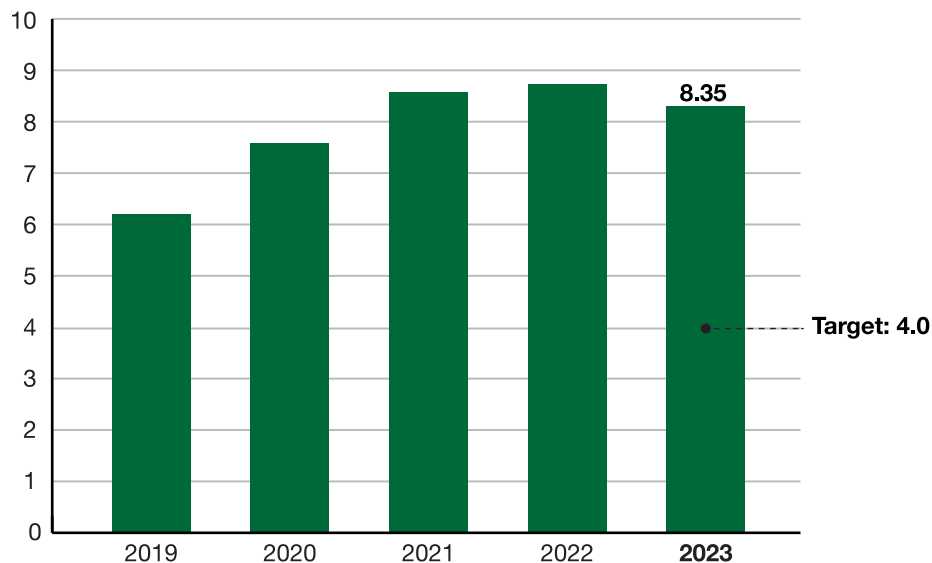
Public lands management index

FY2022-23

8.35

FY2022-23

8.75



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies agency efforts to demonstrate active management on State Forests and engage other public landowners in active sustainable management.

Fewer acres of pine straw sales contributed to this index's slight drop in value.



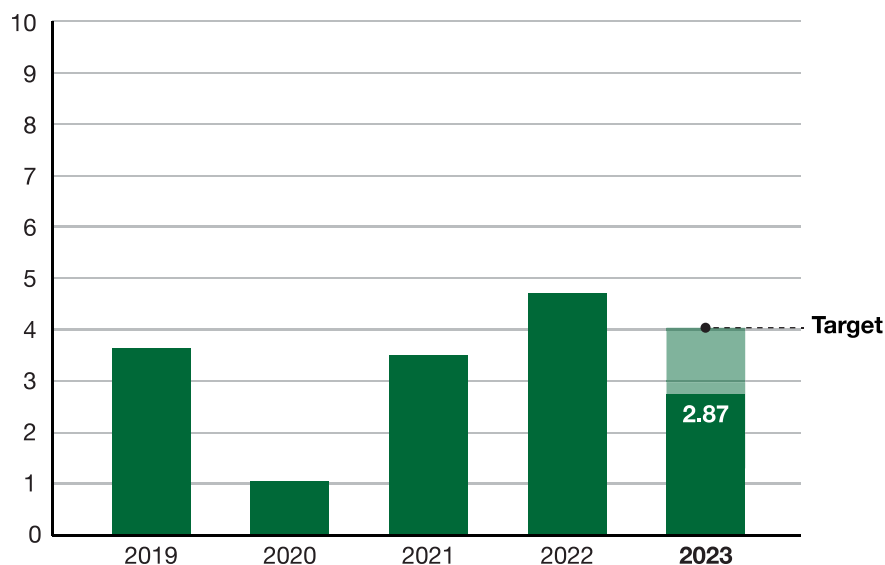
Landowner services index

FY2022-23

2.87

FY2021-22

4.73



Meaningful use of measure:

Composite measure that quantifies agency service-for-fee efforts that promote the sustainable and active management of family-owned forestlands.

All of the metrics that make up this index declined this fiscal year, primarily because of vacancies.



GOAL 3

CONSERVE WORKING FORESTS

PERFORMANCE INDICES

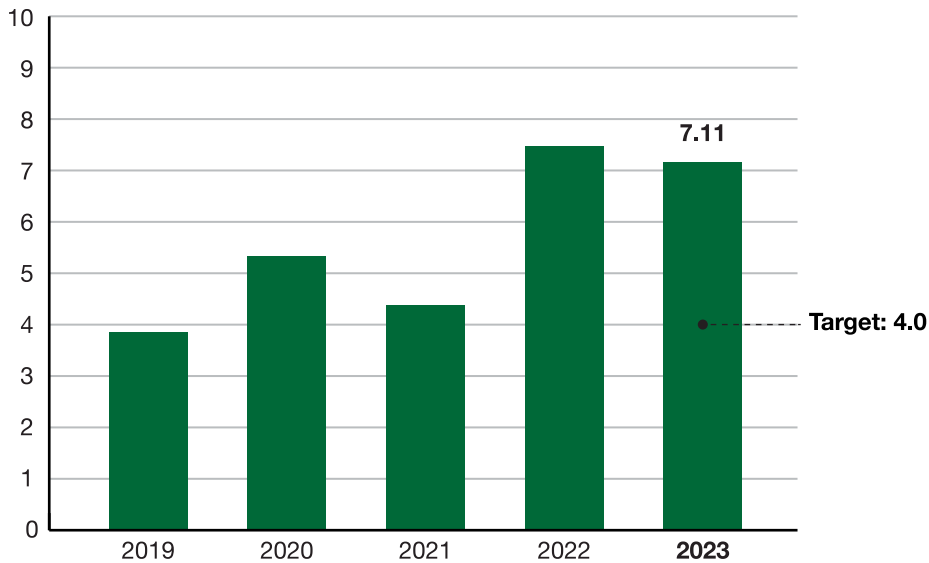
Community forestry index

FY2022-23

7.11

FY2021-22

7.42



Meaningful use of measure:

Composite measure that quantifies agency effort to engage communities to sustain and grow healthy forests.

The slight reduction in this index's value from last year is primarily due to fewer hours of training for county planners.



GOAL 4

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT OUR FORESTS

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

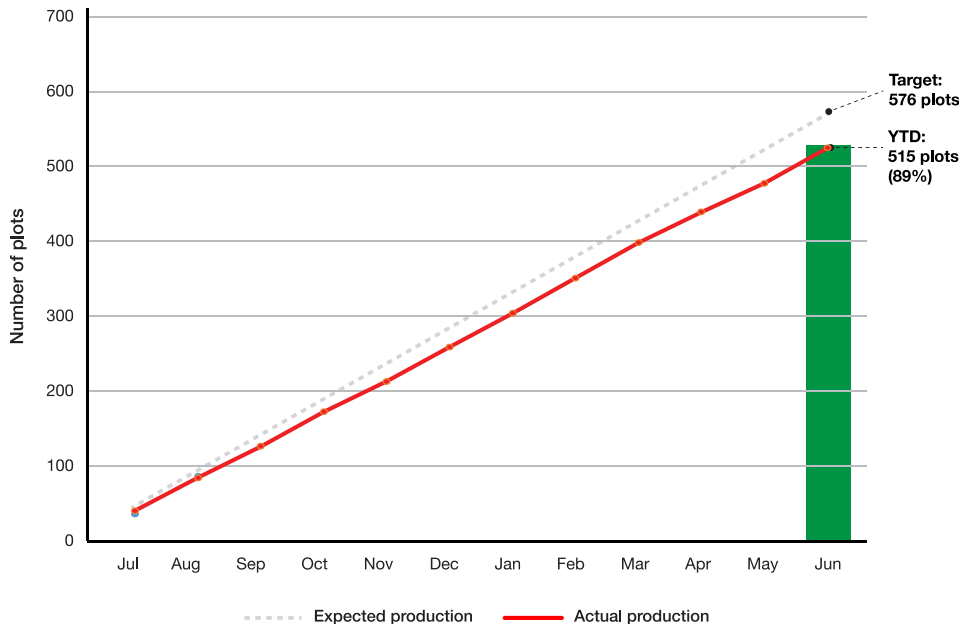
FIA progress

FY2022-23

89
PERCENT

FY2021-22

73
PERCENT



Meaningful use of measure:

Forest Inventory & Analysis plot production records allow us to determine whether we've met our goal of measuring 20% (1 panel) of SC's total plots per year.

The FIA program completed one panel of data collection and began the second panel for the 13th survey. The three permanent crews are fully staffed and we are recruiting for two temporary grant positions in order to increase production.



FIA accuracy scores

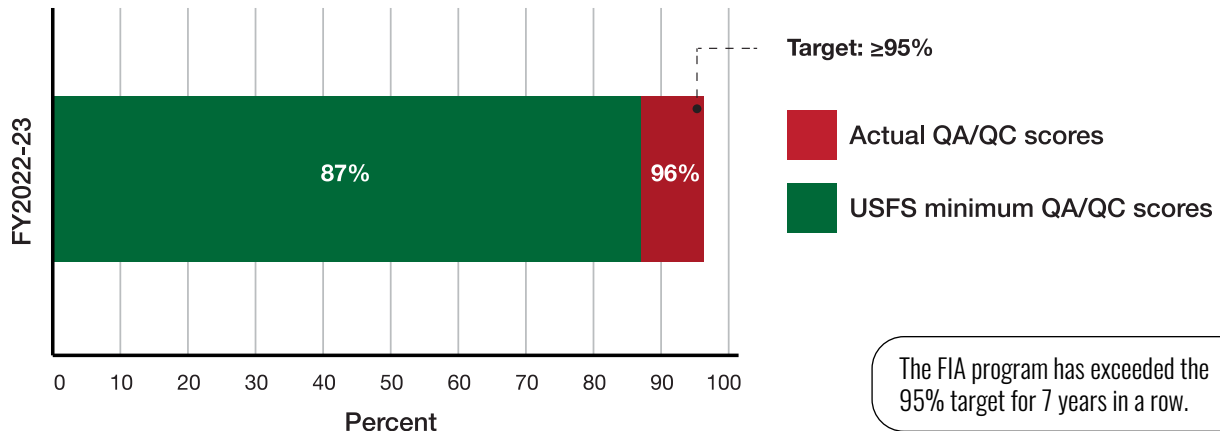
FY2022-23

96
PERCENT

FY2021-22

97.3
PERCENT

Meaningful use of measure: The Forest Inventory & Analysis' accuracy scores quantify the reliability of forest resource estimates. Ninety-five percent (95%) is the agency's goal for FIA accuracy scores.



The FIA program has exceeded the 95% target for 7 years in a row.



GOAL 4

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT OUR FORESTS

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Number of active, certified PLT facilitators

FY2022-23

36

FACILITATORS

FY2021-22

36

FACILITATORS

Meaningful use of measure: The number of active, certified PLT facilitators is a measure of the amplification of environmental education being delivered around the state.



PERFORMANCE INDICES

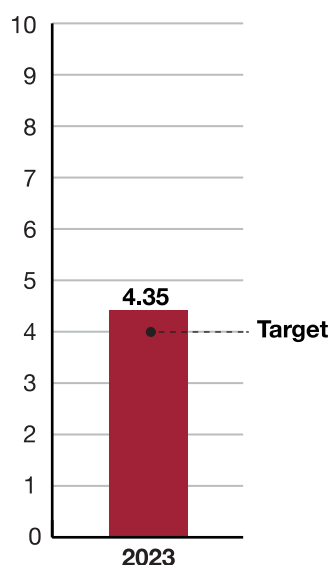
Social media analytics index

FY2022-23

4.35

FY2021-22

N/A



Facebook

Index score: 2.55
Weight: 40%



YouTube

Index score: 5.91
Weight: 25%



Twitter

Index score: 4.51
Weight: 25%



Instagram

Index score: 7.26
Weight: 10%

Meaningful use of measures:

Quantifies the level of engagement the agency has with the public via its social media channels.

This newly reported index is a composite of four other indices, each representing the agency's four social media channels.



GOAL 4

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT OUR FORESTS

PERFORMANCE INDICES

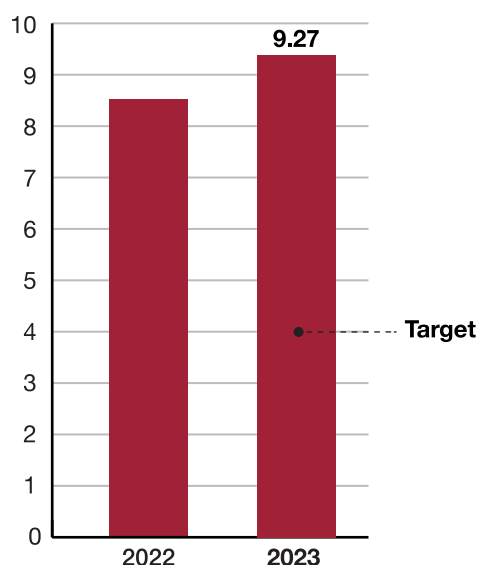
Website analytics index

FY2022-23

9.27

FY2021-22

8.5



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies the level of engagement the agency has with the public via the SCFC website.

This relatively new index contains metrics for which data wasn't available until this fiscal year, leading to the realization that performance level projections were underestimated.



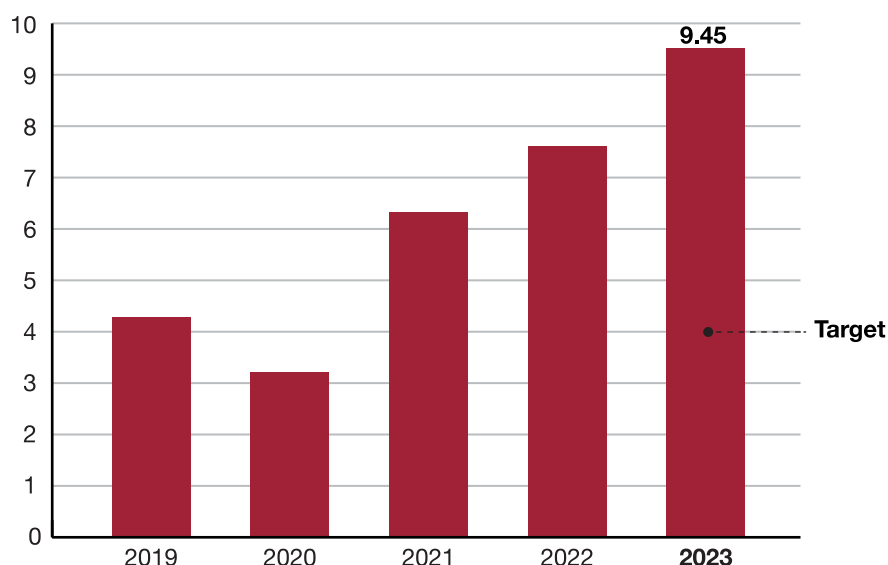
Outreach effort index

FY2022-23

9.45

FY2021-22

7.55



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies agency efforts to increase public knowledge of the benefits of forests and forest management.

The addition of communications staff and post-pandemic recovery of educational programming capacity have boosted this index's value greatly – to the point that the performance level ranges for the metrics making up the index will be adjusted accordingly in FY2023-24.



GOAL 5

STRENGTHEN THE COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE

STANDALONE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

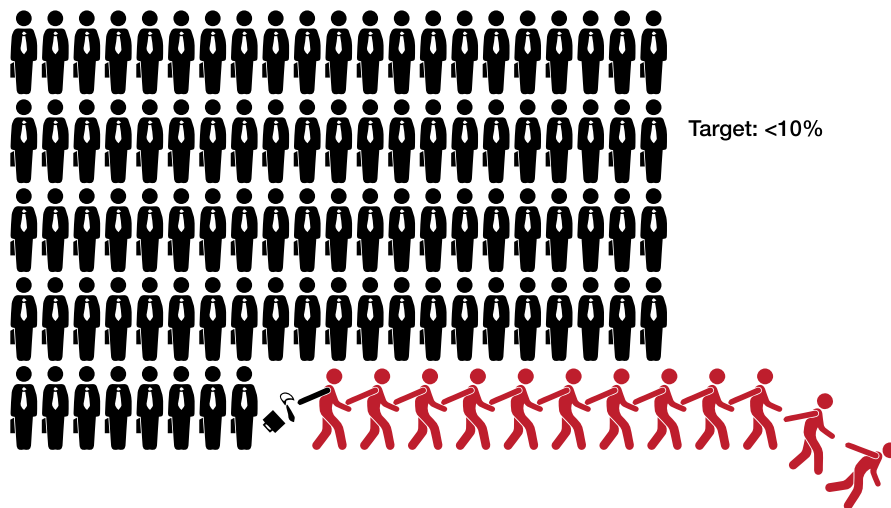
Overall turnover rate

FY2022-23

11.86
PERCENT

FY2021-22

9.16
PERCENT



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies employee attrition over time and provides insight into employee retention and recruitment efforts

In addition to recruitment challenges across several job classifications, turnover ticked up as with many other public- and private-sector organizations.



of qualified candidates per forestry job posting

FY2022-23

4.0
APPLICANTS

FY2021-22

3.92
APPLICANTS



Meaningful use of measure:

The number of qualified candidates respond to open forestry positions and provides a benchmark for agency efforts to promote careers in forestry.

This index's increase from last year is primarily due to more applicants for Forestry Technician positions for which we averaged 5.125 qualified applicants per posting. For Forester postings we averaged 2.9 qualified applicants per posting.



GOAL 5

STRENGTHEN THE COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE

PERFORMANCE INDICES

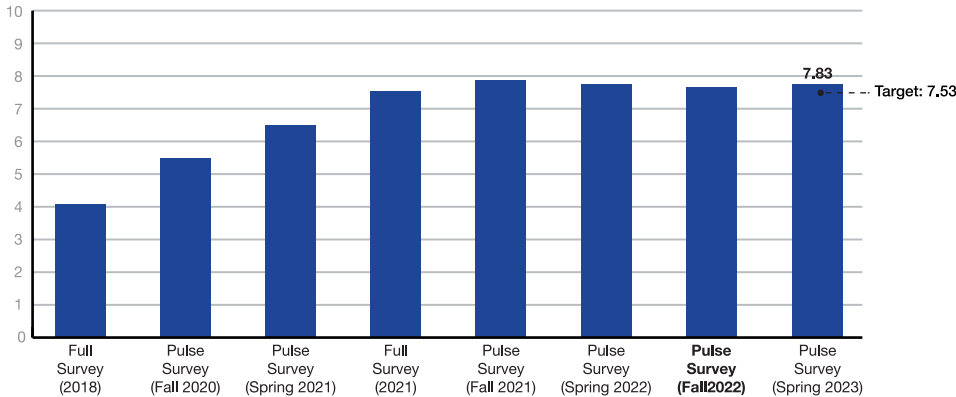
Employee engagement index

FY2022-23

7.83

FY2021-22

7.78



Meaningful use of measure:

Quantifies the efficacy of agency efforts to maintain a skilled, productive and engaged workforce.

This index score is the second-highest in the history of the pulse surveys, and the response rate on the spring 2023 pulse survey (70%) was the highest recorded since the survey's inception.



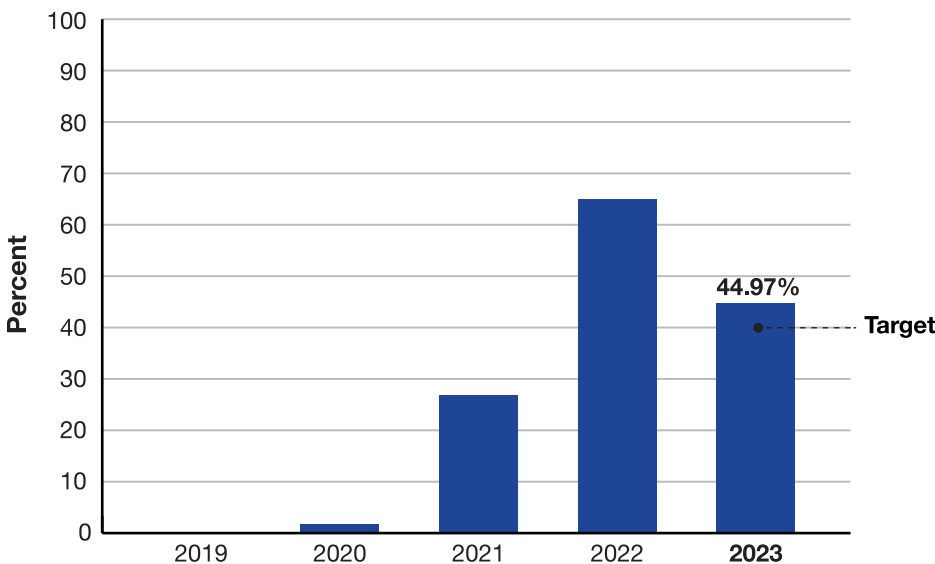
% of technology spending to run/transform the agency

FY2022-23

44.97
PERCENT

FY2021-22

64.2
PERCENT



Meaningful use of measure:

Stand-alone measure that promotes an understanding of how agency IT budgets are being invested against business objectives (i.e. running agency's day-to-day functions vs transforming the agency through innovation) and provides benchmark to adjust focus as necessary.

Major transformative projects included VHF repeater replacements, additional VHF portable radios, and building-wide wireless capability at agency headquarters.





A drone photographed the agency's 14 new units that will be distributed to regional personnel in mid-August. Pictured are Kenworth T880 transports and Caterpillar D2 dozers. Three of the units have Fesco RM1000 lift plows with front-mounted winches, and the other 11 have rear mounted winches. The Piedmont and Coastal Regions will be receiving five each, and Pee Dee will receive four.





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